

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business for up to 30 minutes, with the first half of the time under the control of the majority leader or his designee and the second half of the time under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee.

The Senator from Nevada.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that both sides, Republicans and Democrats, have their full 15 minutes for morning business.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, that would mean the vote for 12 o'clock may slip a little bit because of the time that is already indicated. I ask unanimous consent that the full hour also be given to each side on the time set for debate on the motion for cloture.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Nebraska.

THE GUEST CHAPLAIN

Mr. HAGEL. Mr. President, I want to briefly recognize the distinguished guest Chaplain this morning from Omaha, NE. Reverend Longbottom is a very important part of our community in Nebraska. His spiritual guidance, his involvement in so many civic activities has set him apart over the years, in part because he is one of those individuals who actually gets down into the universe of areas of concern and applies the spiritual to the practical. For that, our State has benefited greatly. I also wish to recognize Reverend Longbottom's wife Lori who accompanied him to Washington as well. We in Nebraska are very proud of the Longbottoms. I am very proud to say a few words about him. I particularly appreciated the President pro tempore allowing me to open the Senate to recognize my constituent and friend, Reverend Longbottom.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Missouri is recognized.

IRAQ

Mr. BOND. Mr. President, I rise to talk about the intelligence we had prior to going into Iraq and the decision that was made overwhelmingly—by I believe 77 votes in this body—to authorize the use of force against Iraq. Today we have received the copy of the Butler report in Great Britain talking about their intelligence failures as well. Lord Butler examined the intelligence the British Government had and found there were problems in their intelligence as well. But they did an in-depth assessment of what they knew then and what they know now.

I thought it was very interesting, since yesterday on this floor a question had been raised about the statement President Bush made in his address to a joint session of both Houses of Congress that Saddam Hussein had sought uranium from Africa.

Conclusion No. 499 in the Butler report is as follows:

We conclude that, on the basis of intelligence assessments at the time, covering both Niger and the Democratic Republic of Congo, the statements on Iraqi attempts to buy uranium from Africa in the Government's dossier and by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons, were well-founded.

By extension, we also conclude that the statement in President Bush's State of the Union Address of 28 January, 2003, that the British Government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa was well-founded.

In other words, an examination by the committee, headed by Lord Butler, to examine intelligence produced by the British Intelligence Service was accurate, that Iraq was seeking uranium from Africa as part of its nuclear weapons program. So much for the charges by many—some in this body—that there was no basis for this statement that President Bush made, based on British intelligence that Iraq was seeking uranium from Africa and that it was not well-founded. It was. And on that, we now have a conclusion from Lord Butler that was the case.

I think the issue was more fully discussed, obviously, in the conclusions of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and in the separate opinion, separate findings produced by Chairman ROBERTS, to which I and other members of the committee signed off.

Today, as I came to work, I heard on the radio a very regrettable and unfortunate opinion piece by a writer from the Washington Post, saying that, obviously, President Bush should not have gone into Iraq, saying in effect that taking down Saddam Hussein was wrong. He was telling our troops, who are on the ground risking their lives—and too many who have given up their lives—we are fighting in vain. That is absolute nonsense. It is regrettable that we have forgotten during a time of war that, generally, politics stops at the water's edge.

As I have mentioned before on the floor, there seems to be a concerted effort by our friends in the other party to contend that, because the intelligence was not as good as it should have been, we should not have gone in and deposed the murderous tyrant who had not only slaughtered tens of thousands of his own people, the Kurds, invaded Kuwait, and threatened Saudi Arabia, but also provided a harbor for terrorists such as al-Qaida and Abu al-Zarqawi's group.

I have had the opportunity to talk to some of the young men and women who have put their lives on the line in Iraq. I would trust their judgment far more than I would trust a political hatchet job by a writer who is trying to score

political points against the President and the Vice President.

Let me go back to a couple of conclusions from the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

Conclusion 92, on page 345, says:

The CIA's examination of contacts, training, and safe haven and operational cooperation as indicators of a possible Iraq/al-Qaida relationship was a reasonable and objective approach to the question.

Conclusion 95, on page 347, says:

The CIA's assessment on safe haven—that al-Qaida or associated operatives were present in Baghdad and northeastern Iraq in an area under Kurdish control—was reasonable.

In other words, judgments were reasonable that this was a country harboring terrorists. Thinking back, do you know what the President said? He said that we are going to carry the war to the terrorists. We are going to go after them where they hide, where they take refuge. We wiped them out in Afghanistan and we had to go into Iraq where they were also gaining safe haven.

To say we are not significantly safer in the United States, or people around the world, our allies, and free people are not safer as a result of deposing Saddam Hussein is pure nonsense. Unfortunately, we are at war with the terrorists. The terrorists were in Iraq. They had access to the weapons of mass destruction that Saddam Hussein had produced in the past and was willing to produce in the future.

Over the last few days, we all have heard briefings on recent increased threats in the United States. Today, had we not acted in Iraq, we would be even more at risk to the possibility of terror, and the likelihood that those terrorist attacks would have included chemical or biological weapons would have been far greater.

Our examination of what happened, what was going on in Iraq, conducted after the war found there were significant production capabilities for chemical and biological weapons in Iraq. There were terrorists there who were seeking to gain access to these weapons. Did we find large stockpiles? No. Did we expect to find large stockpiles? No. At best, they said the amount of chemical and biological weapons would be less than would fill a swimming pool.

But the problem with these chemical and biological weapons, whether they be ricin, sarin gas, anthrax, or smallpox, very small amounts can cause significant death, damage, and destruction to the United States. The potential to kill people with these deadly biological and chemical weapons was terrific, and we are safer because we took him out.

Do we know if we have captured all of the weapons of mass destruction that he produced? No. We cannot know that. We will find out more, I believe, as the Iraqi Government takes steps, through its own security forces, to go after the known and suspected terrorists, to find where they are. We have